



COMMERCIAL RADIO
AUSTRALIA

New Commercial Radio Content Production Standards

January 2012

Introduction

The commercial radio industry implemented three new content production standards from 1 July 2011 as follows:

- A. **Audio Content Standards** – *MANDATORY* for all audio content produced for commercial radio stations, whether analogue or digital, by radio stations, production houses and creative agencies – **no more MP3 accepted from 1 July 2011**

- B. **Image and Text Standards** - apply to all stations being broadcast using digital radio technology in Australia

- C. **Piñata Specification** – **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**

A. Audio Content Standard

From 1st July 2011 all content submitted to radio stations **must comply** with the following:-

A. Mandatory

- 48 KHz, 16 bit, linear uncompressed audio.
- Duration must be within 1% of nominal duration.

B. Recommended

- Audio content should have EBU BWF header.
- Audio content should be contained in a Pinata.

Any audio content received that is NOT in the mandatory format will be returned immediately to the sender to enable conversion to the mandatory format and resubmission.

Why a New Audio Content Standard?

- Previous practice has involved audio being sent to radio stations in a number of different formats and often as MP3 files.
- These files were variable in quality – some were good, while others were very poor.
- A major problem for the industry has been that MP3 sourced material can be degraded further in distribution and digital transmission.
- The goal of the mandatory audio standard is to ensure improved sound quality on all commercial radio stations – analogue and digital.



B. Image (Slideshow) Standard

Mandatory

- Images to be landscape 320 by 240 pixels.
- Images must be JPEG, PNG or Animated PNG. (No GIFs or Animated GIFS)
- Animated PNG files must be no more than 10 frames per second.
- Images intended to be synchronised to an audio advert must be less than 23 Kilobytes in size.

Recommended

- ***Slides should be contained in a Piñata file.***
- ***JPEG slides may be tagged using EXIF.***

Images and Text

- Digital Radio allows for the transmission of images (“slides”) and text as well as audio.
- Slides can be synchronised with advertising audio, or transmitted during other programme segments.
- Images and text must conform to content standards.
- It is also strongly recommended that this content is packaged in a *Piñata* file.

B (1). Slideshow Standard

- Not every receiver will display slides – so ads should function as “stand alone” audio – which may be complemented by the addition of a slide or image.
- Very sharp images with small file sizes can be obtained by using PNG format – with a design based on solid blocks of colour and a restricted colour palette. (eg 16 colours)
- Graphic designers should design their content on a 320 by 240 pixel template for best results; rather than work on larger images and allow automatic compression tools to resize before broadcast.



B(2). DLS Text Standard

- Text transmitted within a digital radio service is known as DLS (Dynamic Label Segment).
- DLS Text messages must be 128 characters or less.
- The size and font cannot be specified – these are determined by the receiver.
- Text cannot be closely synchronised with audio on the majority of digital radio receivers.
- It is recommended that DLS text is contained within a Piñata file.

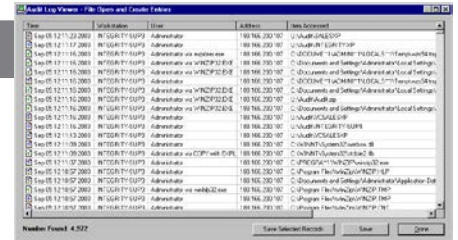
C. Piñata Standard

- Piñata is a file format developed by the Commercial Content Standards Group (CCSG) - a committee formed by Commercial Radio Australia.
- The file format contains high quality audio, text , images and associated metadata in a single file with a unique key number.
- The file format is non proprietary – the specification is freely available from Commercial Radio Australia wilson.ng@commercialradio.com.au

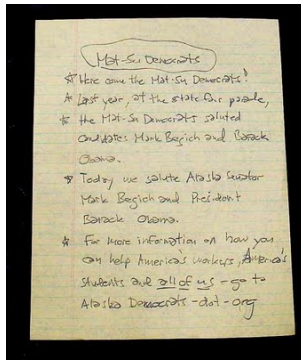
Contents of Piñata File



Audio



Audit file



Copy of script



Slideshow Images



Text



Aims of Piñata Standard

- To allow the various elements of multimedia adverts to be packaged into a single container.
- To allow automated checking that all the individual elements conform to the Commercial Content Standard specifications.
- To allow automated processing of multimedia adverts within the playout system.

Creating Pinata Files.

- Piñata files are created using Piñata production tools compliant with the Piñata Standard.
- Any organisation can develop its own Piñata production tool by referring to the standards freely available from Commercial Radio Australia.
- Piñata production services are provided by digital courier companies, digital courier companies have already developed Piñata production tools which can be obtained from these companies – details provided at the end of this presentation
- A stand alone Piñata application is also available.

Pinata Production Tools

Companies involved in the development of the Piñata Standard and which also have developed and supply a Piñata production and/or distribution service are as follows:

- **Digital Courier** - Piñata production and distribution service - info@digitalcourier.com.au
- **Audionet** - Piñata production and distribution service - dcox@audionet.com.au
- **All in Media (AIM)** –Piñata Production application currently free to radio broadcasters and for sale to production houses – jason.malaure@thisisaim.com